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Redevelopment Board Minutes 12/08/2008

Arlington Redevelopment Board
Minutes of December 8, 2008

Members Present: Andrew West, Chair
Christopher Loreti, Vice Chair
Ed Tsoi
Roly Chaput
Bruce Fitzsimmons

Also Present: Kevin J. O'Brien
Dave Berry
Joey Glushko
Laura Wiener

Andrew West called the meeting to order at 7:05 and asked Kevin O'Brien to explain the options regarding the Symmes project which has two deadlines approaching. The Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) requires that Symmes Redevelopment Associates (SRA) take out all building permits by December 15, 2008 and also sets December 29, 2008 as the date by which the ARB must decide to take back the MOB property or allow SRA more time to find an operator so the site can be developed as a medical office. Kevin O'Brien explained that SRA could not proceed with the development at this time because they cannot obtain construction financing in the current economic crisis. Kevin O'Brien said that he understood that SRA still has not been able to get financing and recommended that both deadlines be extended for a longer period such as six months. He also suggested that it may be appropriate to ask Town Meeting if they want to consider uses other than Medical office for the MOB site. He indicated that SRA will meet with the Board next week and he expects they will ask for an extension of the deadlines.

Chris Loreti suggested that if the Board granted another extension, it should remove SRA's right of first refusal to develop the MOB site if the Town takes it back and offers it on the market for development. Bruce Fitzsimmons offered that he would want some medical related use on the site. Andrew West and Ed Tsoi agreed that they would accept housing on the site. Ed Tsoi suggested SRA be asked to suggest the uses they think could be developed on the site to help us to decide what to recommend to Town Meeting. Chris Loreti suggested that SRA should establish a payment schedule if the deadline is extended. Bruce Fitzsimmons suggested that an extension fee would be a reasonable thing to ask for. Bruce Fitzsimmons also mentioned that the Town should at least get a lien bond if there are still liens on the property.

Andrew West then asked the Board to discuss the Alewife Brook Greenway Improvements in light of the public meeting held by the Selectmen the previous week. Kevin O'Brien explained that the selectmen expected to write a letter of comment within a month and would circulate it for ARB comment before sending it to State DCR.

Andrew West then asked the Board to discuss proposed Warrant Articles for the upcoming Town Meeting. Kevin O'Brien led the Board through a list of proposed articles and recorded comment on them. He said he would bring back revised articles at a meeting soon.

Andrew West then asked the Board to review the minutes of previous meetings. Several changes were made to the minutes of November 17, 2008 and Andrew West asked that the corrected copy be brought back to the Board at the next meeting.

Chris Loreti moved that the minutes of the meeting of November 24, 2008 be approved. Bruce Fitzsimmons seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Because of the lateness of the hour, Andrew West asked that Laura Wiener only give an introduction to the exercise on overlay district zoning. Laura Wiener introduced the subject and distributed a discussion draft of a district that could be proposed for Arlington. Chris Loreti asked that when the Board next discussed this the overlay concept be specifically compared to the B3 and B5 districts and also indicate how it might be used in the I district.

The Board briefly discussed its upcoming schedule and adjourned at 9:55.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin J. O'Brien